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In a ceremony at the White House, U.S. Rep Mark Kirk, R-Highland Park, was promoted to the rank of commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve.

President Bush officially promoted Lt. Cmdr. Kirk, United States Naval Reserves, to the rank of commander in what the Navy calls a frocking ceremony. Joining Kirk at the ceremony Wednesday were his wife, Kimberly (a former naval officer and graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy), his mother Judith Reeve, stepfather Robert Reeve, father Frank Kirk and stepmother Beverly Kirk.

"It is an honor and a privilege to stand before the Commander-in-Chief in the oval office and be a part of this special ceremony," Kirk said. "I am grateful that my wife and family were able to witness this memorable occasion."

Kirk is the only member of Congress drilling regularly as a naval reserve officer. Originally commissioned in 1989, Kirk served as part of a squadron flying the EA-6B Prowler electronic aircraft in the skies over Kosovo during Operation Allied Force and over Iraq during Operation Northern Watch.

Kirk currently serves one weekend a month and two weeks a year as the assistant deputy director for intelligence in the National Military Joint Intelligence Center for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Kirk credits his military experience with helping to secure Navy expenditures of over \$1 billion in new construction at Naval Station Great Lakes and plans the construction of a new joint Navy/VA hospital to be built in North Chicago.